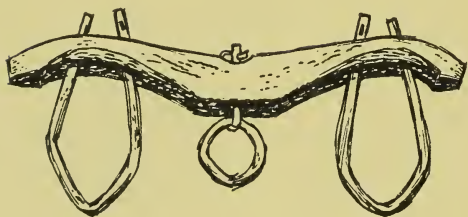


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Abraham Lincoln with the  
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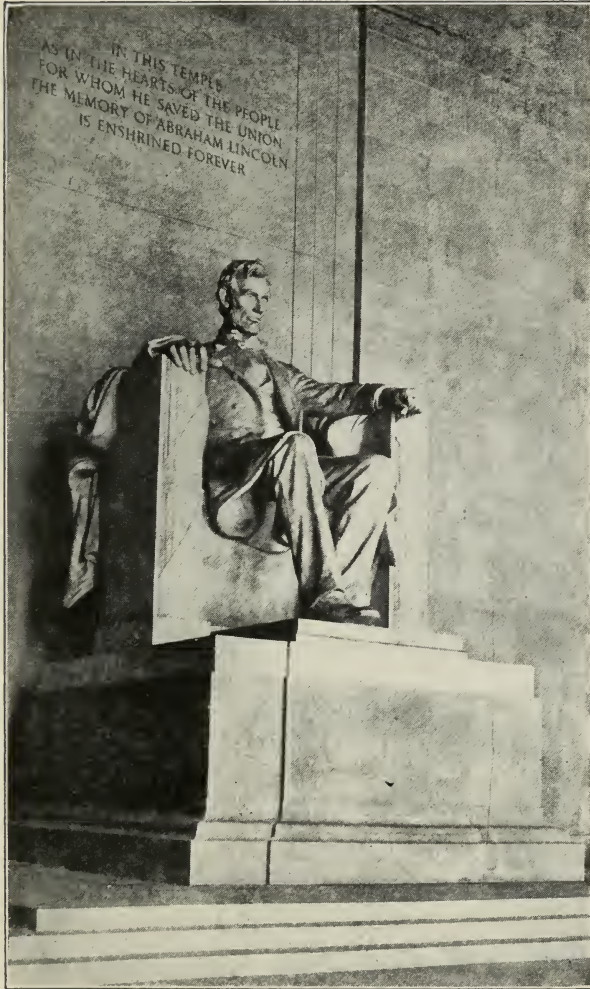
# ABRAHAM LINCOLN: WITH THE IMMORTALS

By  
EMANUEL HERTZ


Delivered over WGL, February 12, 1928







ABRAHAM LINCOLN



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## ABRAHAM LINCOLN: WITH THE IMMORTALS

By EMANUEL HERTZ

IT has become a custom hallowed by the ages to recall annually the memories and performances of those who departed. Fervent and intense as is the observance at first, it gradually mellows and becomes more formal and frequently the anniversary becomes a biennial event and then a quinquennial, then a centennial memorial frequently remembered only—rather than formally observed. The vast majority of these terminate within a short period, for only the closest family ties keep us concerned about those departed. Have we not seen it all in our own day—how short-lived and baseless is temporary fame? The hero of today—whom we greet with triumphal arches and hosannahs—who is greeted by rulers and people alike—is barely remembered twenty years later. Witness the late Admiral Dewey—upon whom the honors of a hundred million people were so unstintingly showered. How many recall that gigantic universal outpouring of praise and pomp and popular acclaim today? McKinley—as lovable a soul as ever lived—universally beloved in his day—is rarely, if ever, referred to. A statue here and there—perhaps three in all—certainly not more—mark all that was earthly of that simple soldier boy—in Phil. Sheridan's regiments—who was raised to the highest post in the land. Who remembers three generals in the Great World War of ten years ago?

We must, therefore, conclude that nothing short of lasting performance, nothing less than what benefits the race, only an unselfish performance coupled with the greatest sacrifice which changes the course of an entire race, frees a people from bondage, and implants upon the minds of those who follow, an eternal elemental principle which up to that day was either

unknown or unrecognized, and which does not change with the tides, nor with the progress of the suns—only such an individual, whoever he be, wherever he comes from—only such an one cannot and will not be forgotten.

And when one such is found, human nature veers completely the other way. No lip worship only, no formal memorial will do. We go the whole length of the gamut of human gratitude and love and set apart an entire day—an entire day in the United States of complete rest, of complete inactivity, of shutting down the myriads of human endeavors and occupations on the farm, in the mine, in the counting house, in the courts, in the schools—all given over and dedicated to the memory of Lincoln—indeed a gigantic sacrifice running into many hundreds of millions of dollars—counting time and effort suspended and money expended and lovingly forgone—in order to celebrate this natal day of him who—like Elijah of old—breathed the spirit of life into an expiring Union. An entire day—not only to remember, to recount, but to contemplate and study the life and character of him who has thus become distinguished. First one State, Massachusetts, twenty years ago, then another, and then President Roosevelt, nineteen years ago, asked the Congress of the United States to declare Lincoln's birthday—a special holiday.

And now there have sprung up all over this land Lincoln organizations, who follow annually a program which has for its sole object to bring before and explain to the people of his Union—young and old—the great services rendered by him to make his Union free and mighty and respected by all the nations of the world—because he made it an emblem of righteousness, an example of brotherly love, a people loving and pursuing justice. His heritage of unselfish advice to the plain people—and he concerned himself mostly with those only—because the vast majority of his fellow-countrymen were plain people, is now and has for the last seventy years been slowly absorbed. His

appeals in his own day seemed to reach those common people—they understood Father Abraham—whether it be the starving, dole receiving cotton spinners of Manchester, England—crippled by the blockade, which prevented the exporting of cotton—or the plain people in the marshes at Shilo, at Vicksburg or in the Wilderness—they all understood him—and went straight into the shadow of the valley of death—because he asked it. The so-called leaders could not respond so quickly. How could you expect the Cabots, the Adamses, the Sumners, the Swards, the Chases, the Lees, the Davises, the Longstreets, the Beauregards and the rest of the aristocracy of the North, as well as of the South, to stoop or rather look up to—for like Saul he towered over all—this crude frontier giant, who would talk in the patois of the frontier, who like Aesop of old would draw his similies from the farm and from nature, and who had as much regard for the art in clothes or the habiliments of the boudoir as did Socrates,—as he walked with his disciples in his Athenian groves.

Somehow or other these few human intellectual giants have a vision of their own—they see through it all—no phrase, no adornment, no veil, no hue, no color—conceals the great heart, the great soul, which burns like a perpetual fire—now and forever. Unconsciously, perhaps, Lincoln ignored all these superficialities—suffered from all these social disadvantages so-called, and concerned himself with eternal things only. He may have even used some of these social leaders—for he needed mannikins in the diplomatic service—he needed social secretaries—he needed intermediaries with these recalcitrant Governors and unreasonable Senators, with these pompous and strutting would-be saviours of the nation, who simply did not comprehend him or the problems with which he was coping. Today he was perfectly willing to give up his task to anyone who would appear to be able to do better than he—the next day he actually convinced the two or three other men in the country—who seemed to understand the enormous task, but actually tried

to sidestep it—or to sacrifice the Union in carrying out their theory as to slavery—that to do what they advocated was treason if not madness outright;—and then when he had arranged the fighting forces, his diplomatic forces, his legislative forces, his State leaders and his spiritual leaders, into some semblance of team work—he was forced to combat the entire Democratic party who had actually succeeded in organizing itself in the North under the sinister influences of Valladigham, Pendleton and Seymour in opposition to his struggle for the Union—and urged cessation of hostilities at any price and negotiation for peace with the Confederacy in 1864 at any cost—the very thing he prevented England and France and other European powers from inaugurating two years before. But in time they simply withered before him—the party almost ceased to exist. Not one of these time servers, not one of these political or military leaders saw or wanted to see or hear his mellow reasoning or his well considered program. Resignations from high officials were either threatened or requested—for Lincoln could not forever be trifled with—Chase ascertained that to his complete discomfiture. Washington was a treason-infested town—and the miracle of it all was that the assassination of the one man who stood between the living and the dead—was so long deferred.

Little wonder, then, that those who lived to see what he had accomplished turned an intellectual somersault and from suspicion turned to trust, from carping heartless criticism, to immeasurable love and praise and appreciation and trust. He had made it clear, at last, that Lincoln had a policy, that Lincoln was honest, that Lincoln was capable, that Lincoln was unselfish, that Lincoln was trustworthy, that Lincoln was a statesman, that Lincoln was a great military leader, that Lincoln was a diplomat, that Lincoln was adamant on saving the Union, that Lincoln was not a slave driver, that Lincoln was not a clown, that Lincoln was not a cruel conqueror, that Lincoln was not an enemy of the South, that Lincoln was not pre-

pared to upturn Southern society, that Lincoln was not against peace on honorable terms, that Lincoln was not a candidate for re-election, that Lincoln was not here to perpetuate a military hierarchy; above all, that Lincoln was not afraid, and could not be intimidated or turned from the one true course he had outlined to himself when he registered his oath in heaven to preserve the Union. And now that he was no more—all saw even more clearly how this simple child of the forest had been selected by Providence to bridge the chasm between the slave and the free, between a mobocracy and a democracy, between darkness and between light.

Of course, there were those who saw it not to the very end—nay to this day there be learned dissenters. Men today demonstrate by quoting the unspeakable Billingsgate of Civil War and Reconstruction times, then voiced by the halt, the lame, the sick, the envious, the mentally decrepit—that the real Lincoln was not what the people thought he was. Of course, we are not concerned with those—there be even spots on the sun—but the sun ever shines, and yields life and nourishment and health and vigor—and only the lame, the halt and the blind concede it not. But they are as ineffective as the fool who sayeth there is no God. The commotion, the noise, the misleading rumors, the unholy slanders, were gaining such velocity, such strength, were voiced from so many points of vantage, appeared and reappeared in so many disloyal and half loyal sheets, that Lincoln himself began to doubt—not that his cause was just—not that his was the only course to pursue—but he began to doubt whether the people, his people, would continue to stand by him or whether the siren sounds of peace, of a disgraceful peace, of a perverted peace—would not finally become so effective as to distract the attention of his followers and finally defeat him at the polls, at a time when the rays of the rising sun of victory and of peace with honor, were becoming visible on the horizon.



And at one time, and only one time, he said: "It is my belief that from present indications, the Administration will be defeated at the polls at the next Election." But he had hardly spoken these words—when things began to happen. Grant regenerated the army and it began to hammer away at Lee's army and the process of attrition was on. Sherman began to destroy the heart of the Confederacy—Sheridan destroyed its source of supplies; Thomas (a Northern Robert E. Lee) gave the death blow to the Confederacy—when he wiped out its army within its borders and helped to isolate Lee. Farragut at Mobile and the blockade along the entire coast—and the Election in November was as overwhelming as was the work of the army and of the navy. The people had overwhelmingly spoken again for Abraham Lincoln. The prophets of evil, the soothsayers in the North were indeed as effective as the fool who sayeth there is no God.

But the common people, the plain people, the poor people, Lincoln's people, Lincoln's neighbors, Lincoln's soldiers, Lincoln's sailors, Lincoln's clients—an entire nation of clients saw it all—not only at the end when even Chase and Andrew and Reverdy Johnson and Henry Winter Davis began to concede and to comprehend—they saw in the beginning—God Almighty had opened their eyes and they beheld Lincoln and Douglas arguing and debating whether a house divided against itself could stand. Douglas wanting the Senatorship said it *could*; Lincoln, however, cared *not* for the Senatorship and actually lost it when he said, so that an entire world could hear: "A house divided against itself *cannot* stand,"—and won the Presidency. I know of no better example or anecdote which better describes that great event—the dramatic election of 1860—than the quotation from Major H. C. Whitney, in concluding his great work—"Lincoln on the Circuit":

Major Henry C. Whitney in concluding one of the few real works on Lincoln tells the following illuminating anecdote:

The story is somewhere told, that, twenty-five centuries ago, the citizens of Mitylene resolved to erect a statue of Jupiter, Father of Gods and Men, in front of that masterpiece of architecture, the great theatre: and that they invited a display of statutes of the mythological god, from which to choose one, adequate.

Upon the day of choice, the citizens of the Lesbian Isle crowded into the plaza, there to behold two draped figures which were to compete for the honor of saluting the sun, as it arose from the Mediterranean, for hundreds of slowly revolving years.

The draperies fell apart, and revealed a figure of classical beauty—the perfection of symmetry—a paragon of sculpture—a miracle of art—an image in which glorious life had been arrested at its highest tide—a fit marble ideal of the presiding divinity in the assemblage of the Gods !

Also a rough effigy of a human figure—no majesty in its lineaments—no grace in its pose—apparently no art in its execution—no harmony in its relations—no dignity in its bearing:

“Tetrum ante omnia vultum.”

The popular verdict was prompt—one mighty shout should rent the air:—“*Here is our Jupiter!*”—was the universal acclaim, all pointing to the masterpiece of sculpture; “*to the sea with the base imposture*”; designating the inglorious statue.

But the poet Alcaeus arrested the fierce outcry: “Men and brethren,” exclaimed he, “I crave one further test of judgment: let but the applauded and the condemned statues, each, be elevated to the height of the shaft where the chosen one is to find its long repose, before we judge conclusively.”

To this fair proposal, assent was finally made; and on the designated day, the same eager throng filled the great space which was to be the scene of final judgment.

The two draped figures were poised in mid-air. The drap-

eries were unloosed, and the two competitors stood out in bold relief against the pure azure sky.

But mark the change! the favorite had been transformed by the intervening distance. The classical features—the sparkling eye—the luminous countenance, had vanished: but, a greater transformation had been wrought in the other figure, by distance, the arch-enchanter.

Life had been impressed upon those hitherto ungainly features—majesty sat enthroned upon those rugged lineaments—the eyes gleamed with the fire of genius;

\* \* \* deep on his front engraven

Deliberation sat, and public care;

and a God stood outlined in classical marble, to the view.

A cry went up, drowning the sound of the waves that broke on the Lesbian shore: *"Here is, indeed, a God! this is worthy to preside at the council of the Immortals! This is JUPITER!"*

In the year of destiny—1860—our people, moved by Fate, met to select a Jupiter Tonans, to preside over councils much more majestic than the fabled assemblages of Mount Olympus: councils involving the destiny of the human race.

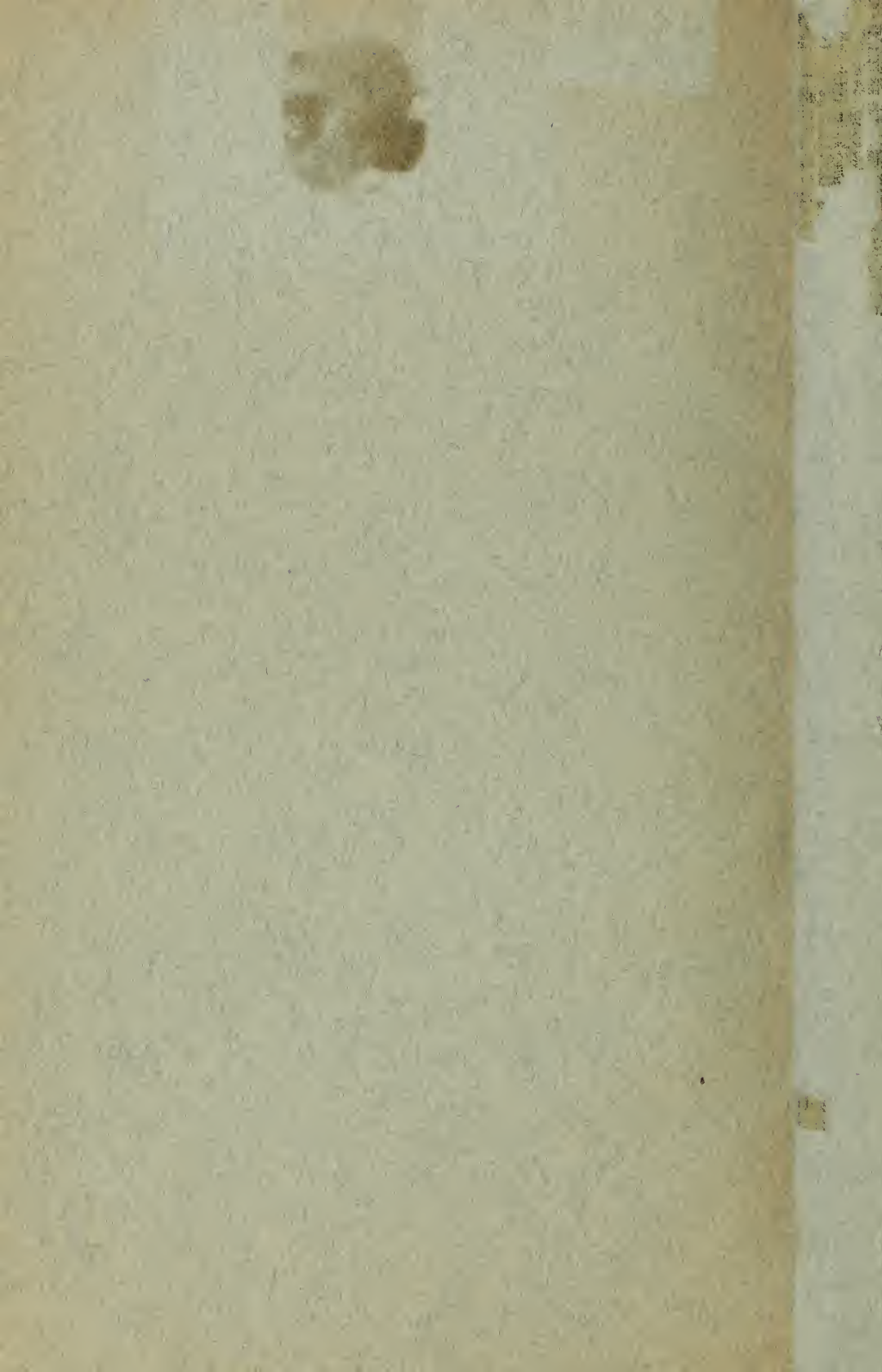
The competition which ensued and its result, are indited on the most familiar pages of recent history; and the statue of ABRAHAM LINCOLN, reproduced *ad infinitum* in bronze, granite and marble, and enshrined in all patriotic hearts, will remain the great central figure of humanity and unselfish patriotism as long as civilization shall hold sway.



















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